

Usnea cornuta

SYNONYMS

Usnea arida Motyka,

FAMILY

Parmeliaceae

AUTHORITY

Usnea cornuta Körb.

FLORA CATEGORY

Lichen – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lichens - Fruticose

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Characterised by the corticolous habit; the compact, shrubby nature of the thallus; a wide medulla (*U. fragilescens*-group); narrow axis, branches slightly to markedly inflated; numerous, punctate soralia that may become in part isidiose and confluent; and salazinic and norstictic acids in the medulla (K+ yellow→red).

DISTRIBUTION

North Island: Northland to Wellington. **South Island:** Nelson to Southland.

Stewart Island: Widely distributed, lowland and coastal.

Known also from Great Britain, Europe, Macaronesia, North America, Mexico, India, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Australia and Chile.

HABITAT

Epiphytic on bark of *Metrosideros*, *Leptospermum*, *Olearia*, *Pterophylla*, fruit trees, dead twigs, stumps, fenceposts, wooden gates and out buildings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Thallus fruticose to subpendulous, spreading from base, 5-10 cm tall, green to yellowish-green, often brownish-red in parts, soft and flaccid when wet, irregularly subdichotomously branching, corticolous. **Branches** 0.5-2.5 mm thick, inflated, secondary branches numerous, often articulate-cracked at branch points, cortex glossy especially towards base, papillate, rarely with small, white, scattered, punctate **pseudocyphellae**, possibly formed through abrasion of **papillae**, sorediate, with many lateral **fibrils**, **seudoisidia** and **spinules**, giving the plant a bristling appearance. **Soredia** discrete or crowded, often becoming **pseudoisidiate**. **Apothecia** not seen.

Chemistry: Thallus and medulla K+ yellow→red, C-, KC+ red, Pd+ orange; containing salazinic, norstictic, and usnic acids.

SIMILAR TAXA

Can be confused with *U. dasaea*, *U. inermis* and *U. rubicunda*. Chemically it can be distinguished from *U. inermis* because *U. inermis* is never K+. *Usnea cornuta* and *U. dasaea* are both K+ but *U. dasaea* will slowly turn a deep dark red because of the galbinic acid. Also the axis is very narrow in *U. cornuta*, with a lax medulla.



Lignicolous on dead macrocarpa branch, Hokianga Far North. Photographer: Marley Ford, Licence: CC BY.



Corticolous on fence, Hokianga Far North. Photographer: Marley Ford, Licence: CC BY.

SUBSTRATE

Corticolous

ETYMOLOGY

cornuta: Knobbed

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (1 May 2022). Brief description, Distribution, Habitat, and Features sections copied from Galloway (1985, Galloway (2007).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Galloway D.J. 1985: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens*. Wellington: PD Hasselberg, Government Printer. 662 pp.
Galloway D.J. 2007: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens, including lichen-forming and lichenicolous fungi*. 2nd edition. Lincoln, Manaaki Whenua Press. 2261 pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/usnea-cornuta/>